

How to Write a Discussion Essay (Class 13 – Abitur)

What is a Discussion Essay?

A **discussion essay** is a formal text where you present **different opinions about a controversial topic** and then give a balanced conclusion.

You should:

- discuss **advantages and disadvantages**
- explain different viewpoints
- support arguments with examples
- reach a justified conclusion

Example topics:

- Should AI be used in schools?
- Should social media be restricted?
- Should university education be free?

Structure

1. Introduction

Purpose: Introduce the topic and the debate.

Include:

- background information
- why the topic is important
- the question you will discuss

Example:

In recent years, artificial intelligence has become an important topic in education. While some people believe that AI can support students, others are concerned about its negative effects. Therefore, the advantages and disadvantages of using AI in schools should be considered.

2. Main Body

Paragraphs: Arguments FOR

Explain reasons supporting the topic.

Use **PEEL**:

P – Point: Main argument

E – Explain: Explain your idea

E – Example: Give an example

L – Link: Connect to the topic

Example:

One advantage of AI is that it can provide personalised learning. Students can receive immediate feedback and practise according to their individual needs. For example, language learners can improve their writing with AI support. Therefore, AI can make learning more effective.

Paragraphs: Arguments AGAINST

Present the opposite viewpoint.

Useful phrases:

- However, critics argue that...
- On the other hand...
- A major disadvantage is...

Example:

However, AI can also create problems. Some people argue that students may become dependent on technology and stop developing their own skills.

3. Conclusion

Summarise the main points and give your final judgement.

Example:

In conclusion, AI has both advantages and disadvantages. Although it can support learning, it should be used responsibly. A balanced approach is the best solution.

Useful Linking Words

Adding: furthermore, moreover, in addition

Contrast: however, whereas, nevertheless

Examples: for example, for instance

Result: therefore, consequently

Conclusion: to conclude, overall, taking everything into consideration

Checklist

- ✓ Discuss both sides
- ✓ Use clear paragraphs
- ✓ Give examples
- ✓ Use formal language
- ✓ Include a balanced conclusion
- ✓ Avoid only giving your personal opinion

Length: around 450–600 words for Abitur level.